

Launch of the 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria

Making sustainable trade part of the solution

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Opening remarks

Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD

Distinguished partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to launch today the updated BioTrade Principles and Criteria. These principles and criteria are important; they guide governments, businesses and entrepreneurs on the path to sustainability.

They are a set of guidelines for the sustainable sourcing, transformation and commercialization of goods and services derived from plants and animals, as well as from ecosystem services. They are anchored on the very three pillars of sustainability: economy, society and environment.

Upon launching BioTrade Principles and Criteria in 2007, they became the core foundation of our work on BioTrade, and were critical in navigating BioTrade to where it is today: BioTrade benefits millions of people in over 60 countries and generated more than €5 billion in sales in 2019.

An excellent example is Peru. The country set up a National Commission for the Promotion of BioTrade in 2010. The commission has mobilized the trade, production, agriculture, forestry, environment and business sectors to support SMEs in accessing international markets and be more competitive in BioTrade exports. These actions enabled the country to increase such exports to around \$500 million annually. The impact this can have on local communities I have personally witnessed last year when I visited the country.

Governments, companies, academia and NGOs have applied BioTrade Principles and Criteria in their business models, operations and policies, and thus contributed to curbing biodiversity loss and generate livelihoods. These are important contributions and accomplishments.

Let me give you three concrete examples:

In Namibia, the Eudafano Women's Co-operative produces marula oil under the BioTrade Principles and Criteria for companies such as The Body Shop. Their work has benefitted 4,000 women and has uplifted the lives of rural communities.

Salay Shaae Saung, a company in Myanmar, considers that adopting the sustainability principles made them resilient to the business challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Union for Ethical BioTrade has built its Ethical BioTrade Standard on the BioTrade Principles and Criteria. Over 60 member companies adhere to these Standards as an assurance that their products are made with ingredients that are sourced in respect of people and biodiversity.

And soon, small-scale coastal producers in the Eastern Caribbean region will be guided by these principles and criteria in the sustainable production and trade of queen conch.

Today, we celebrate the culmination of two years of global consultations with our partners and practitioners in revising the BioTrade Principles and Criteria.

The 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria reflect the evolving legal and policy frameworks. They build on the valuable experiences, best practices and lessons learned from BioTrade partners and practitioners.

And the innovation does not stop here. The Principles and Criteria are embedded in the BioTrade self-assessment tool, which we developed with ITC and are also launching today. This tool allows companies to assess where they stand in relation to sustainability standards and receive guidance on how to improve.

The revision of the principles and criteria and the development of the tool were a truly collective effort; UNCTAD could not have done it alone. I want to take this opportunity to thank all partners for their contributions and the shared vision about the importance and relevance of this work. And I want to especially recognize the steady support received from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO.

Indeed, partnerships are fundamental to progress in this area of work. Partners and practitioners of BioTrade support the objectives and principles of biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and play an essential part in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework that is currently negotiated.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am sure we all agree that sustainable trade must be part of any solution in the conservation and sustainable use of our biodiversity resources.

Biodiversity is a global concern and priority. At the UN Biodiversity Summit in September, governments, leaders, companies and financial institutions all showed their firm commitment. But urgent action is needed if we want to ensure the sustainability of the richness of biodiversity. I am pleased that with the 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria we can make a contribution to this goal.